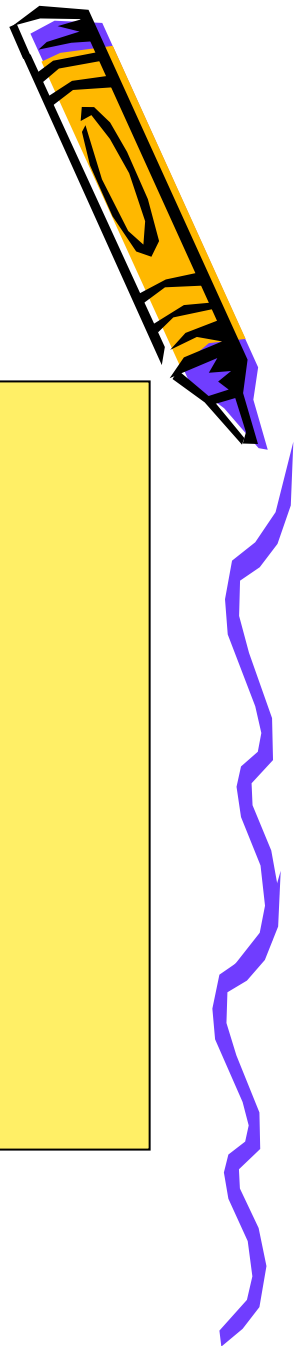




**Teachers Attitudes And  
Expectations To  
Giftedness**

# Objectives

- Introduction and background
- Outline of research
- Research findings
- Where to next?
- Questions and discussion



# Why Gifted ?

*" Gifted and talented students possess the attributes to enrich their own lives and to make a valuable contribution to the knowledge society yet, all too often, this potential is not fulfilled. The perception that gifted students will achieve regardless of educational provision still lingers, despite the raft of research which points to the tragic loss of potential resulting from the failure to engage gifted students during their early years. From preschool onwards our gifted students are vulnerable emotionally, socially and cognitively because of the mismatch between current educational provision and their demonstrated needs." Frances Hill (2005)*

Tall Poppies. Vol 30 No.2. 2005



# Definition

- There is no universal definition as giftedness is not easily defined.

*"A gifted child is one who performs or has the ability to perform at a level significantly beyond his or her chronological aged peers and whose unique abilities and characteristics require special provisions and social and emotional support from the family, community, and educational context."*

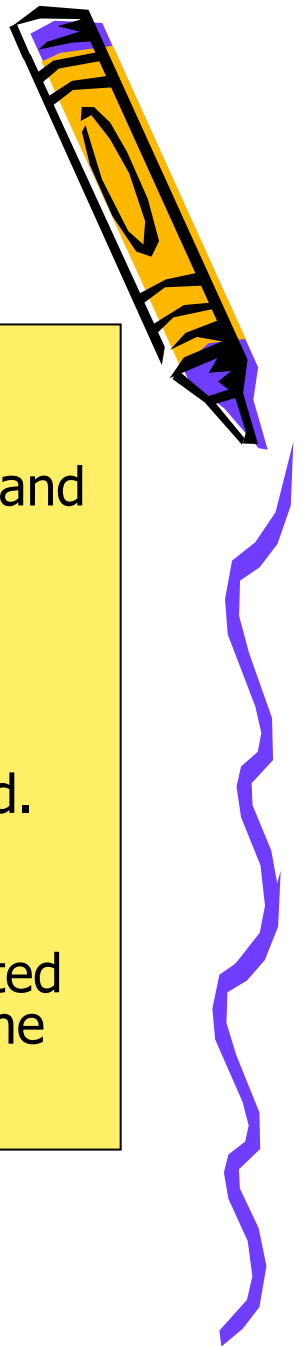
Harrison (1995)



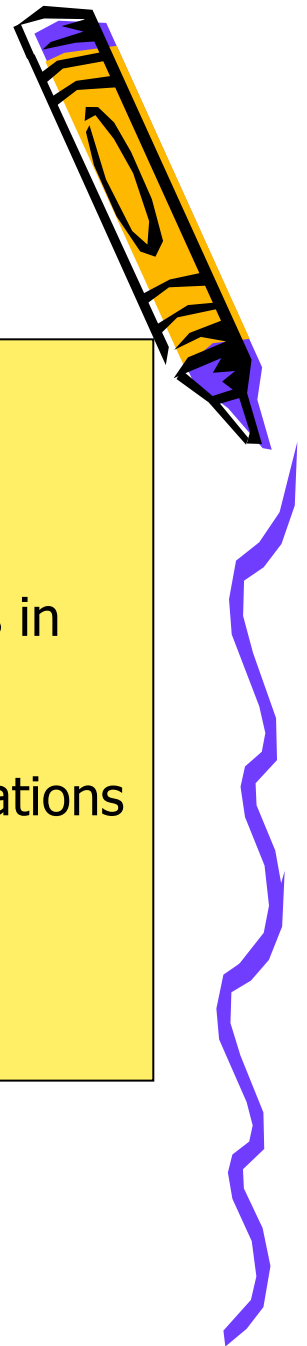
# Outline of Research

- A wide range of reading, literature review written.
- Questionnaire for teachers in 22 Kindergartens developed and circulated. Results collated and analysed.
- Research questions defined.
- Professional development workshop for teachers presented.

Prior to the workshop teachers completed questionnaire 2 designed to discover current understandings regarding gifted learners. Questionnaire data rated and interpreted using the Likert type scale and formula.



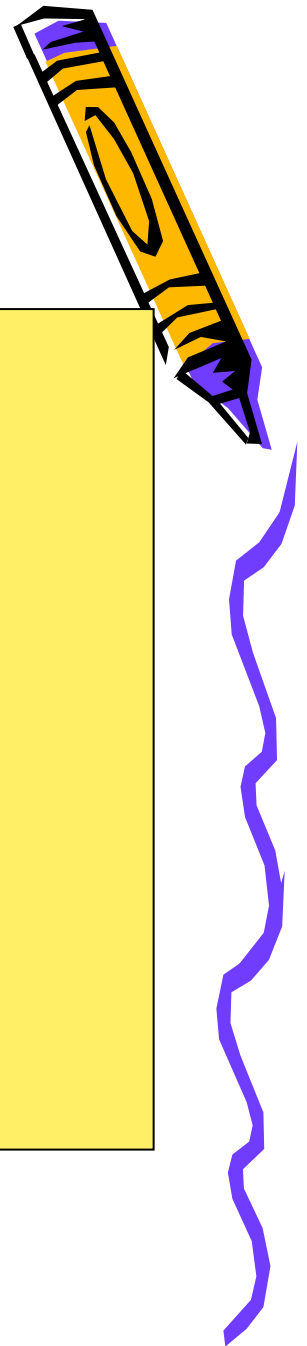
## Outline continued



- Results incorporated and addressed within the workshop.
- At the end of the workshop teachers completed the same questionnaire and this data was used to identify any shifts in understanding.
- Research written, published and findings and recommendations presented to the Board of Trustees of the Dunedin Kindergarten Association.



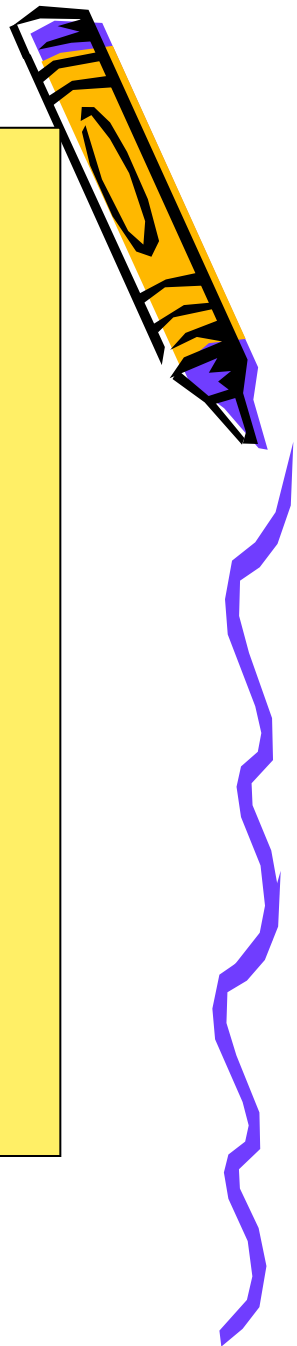
# Literature Review Points



- ✓ Giftedness is not easily defined
- ✓ Not all children are gifted
- ✓ Under representation of certain groups- Maori, diverse cultures, low socio-economic, disabilities, gender.
- ✓ Children's early years are crucial to development & achievement.
- ✓ Gifted children do need additional educational support

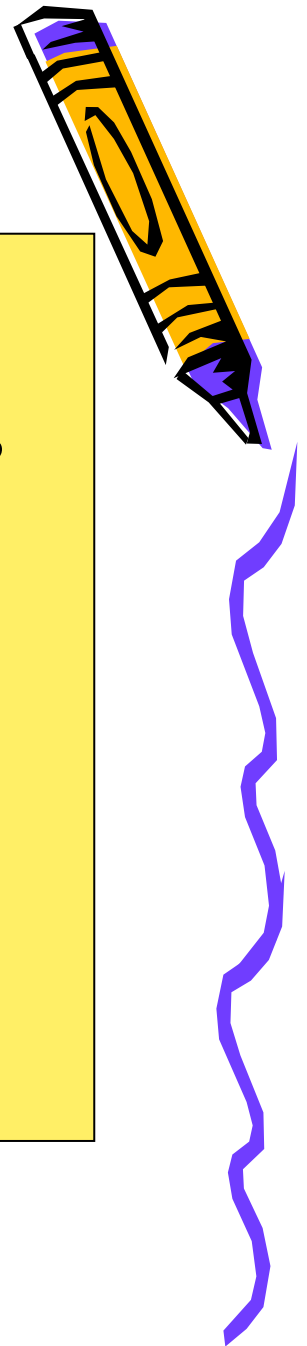


- ✓ Social and emotional development is a major concern especially for parents
- ✓ No one size fits all
- ✓ Early Childhood curriculum Te Whāriki fits well
- ✓ Teacher expectations are powerful
- ✓ Society does not adapt easily to the gifted
- ✓ Teachers need to be proactive in challenging attitudes & beliefs
- ✓ Many teachers are willing to cater for gifted children but lack the knowledge and skills





# Results from Questionnaire 1



What does gifted mean to teachers?

- 27 areas were defined

Do you suspect any gifted children currently at Kindergarten?

- 72% answered yes
- 28% answered no

Do you currently have, or ever had parents nominating their child as gifted?

- 73% answered yes
- 27% no

Impact on learning

- 27 areas identified

Parent nominations  
Indicators  
Impact on learning  
Funding  
Whāriki  
Bicultural  
Additional support required



Identification tools used?

26 identified

Indicators observed?

43 indicators identified

How does gifted fit with Te Whāriki?

22 areas identified

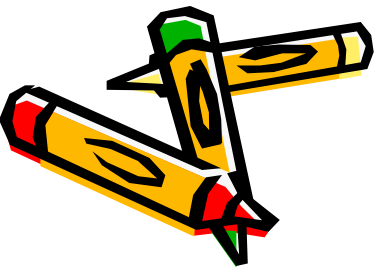
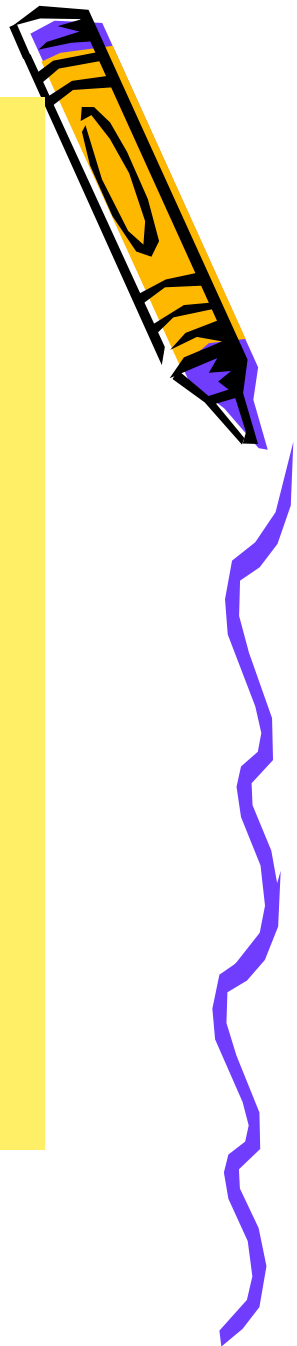
Barriers

39 identified

PD and support required

28 areas identified

Other questions - 12



## Findings Questionnaire 2

Highlighted a weak understanding and need for PD within-

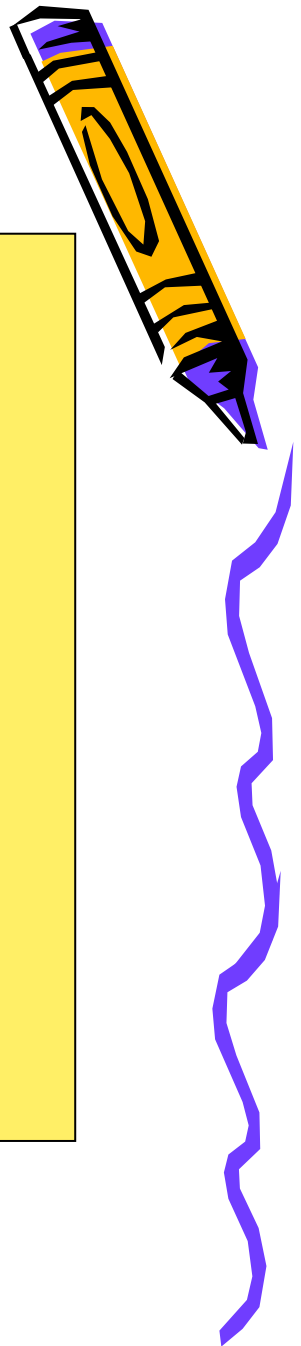
- ✓ Identification
- ✓ Unrepresented groups
- ✓ Working with others at same ability level

Good understanding but would benefit from further PD-

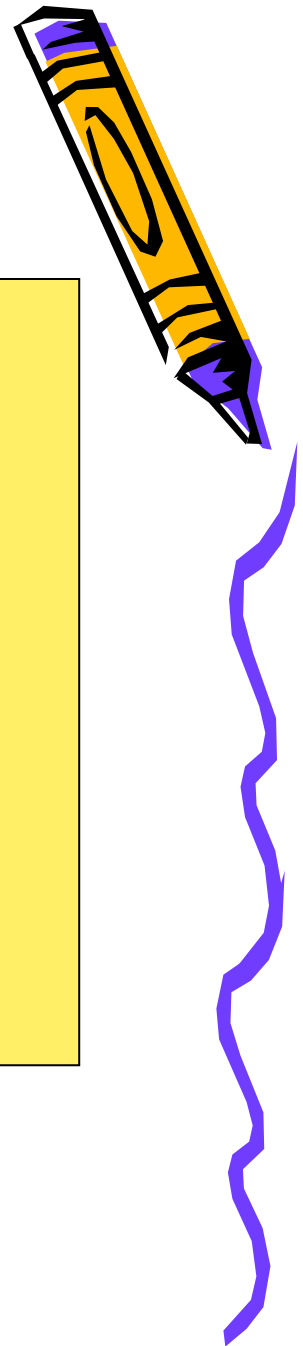
- ✓ Parent nominations
- ✓ If ECE can meet gifted children's potential
- ✓ Issues for gifted children

Very good understanding of-

- ✓ Need for further teacher training
- ✓ Gifted education is relevant to teachers
- ✓ Need for special provision for the gifted child



# Workshop



- The workshop was prepared and presented incorporating the questionnaire findings.
- After the workshop the teachers completed the same questionnaire (number 3) to ascertain any shifts in understanding/attitudes/expectations.



# Shifts In Understanding

Weak understandings post workshop-

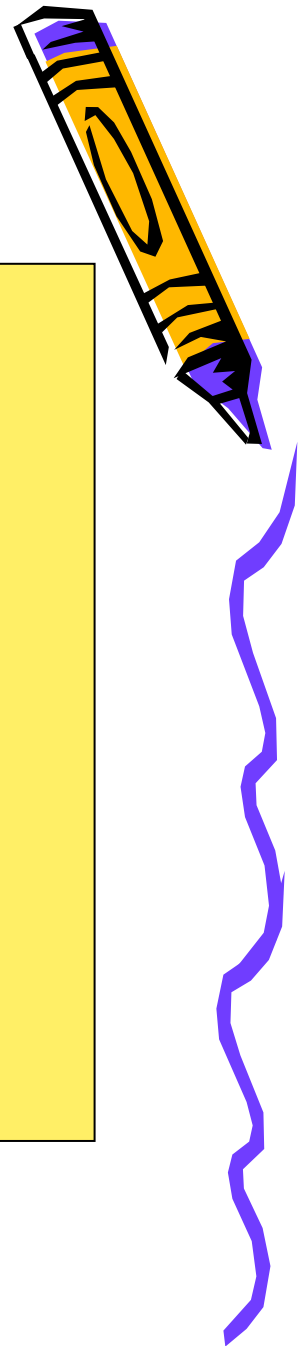
- ✓ Identification

Good understanding but would benefit from further PD-

- ✓ If ECE can meet gifted children's potential
- ✓ Working with others at same ability level
- ✓ Issues for gifted children

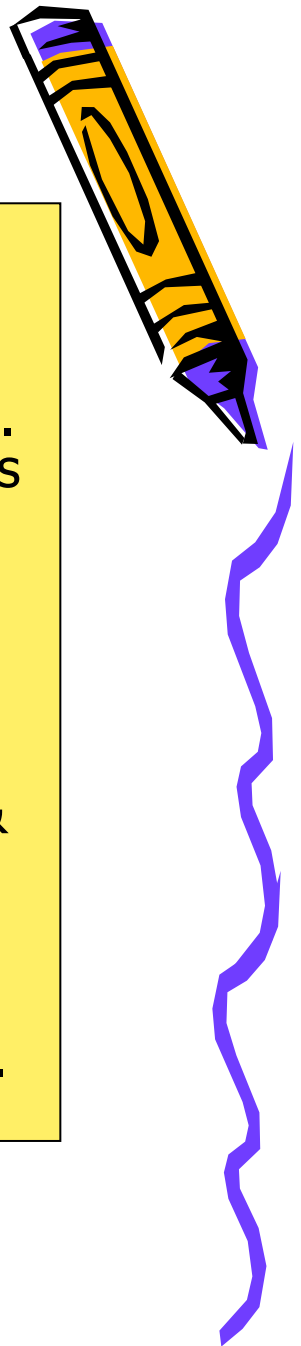
Very good understanding of-

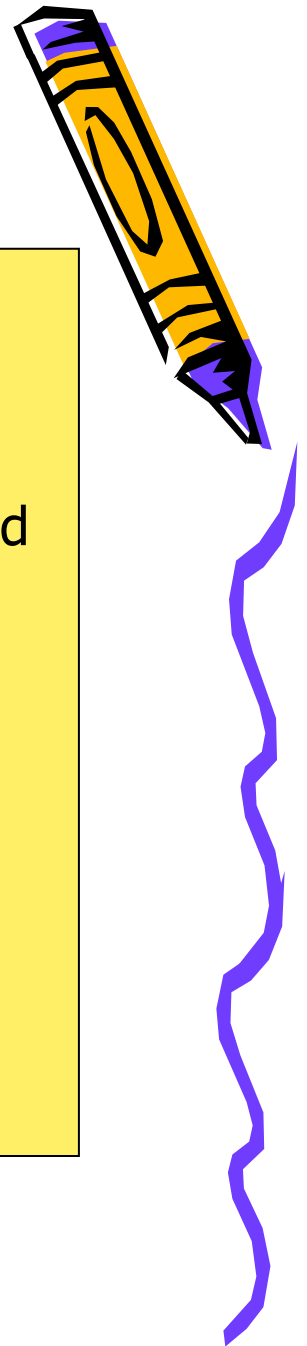
- ✓ Unrepresented groups
- ✓ Parent nominations
- ✓ Need for special provision to succeed
- ✓ Need for further teacher training & relevance to teachers



# Shifts In Understanding

- ✓ *Identification- Remained same.*  
Teachers identified that they are unsure of what this entails.  
Also lack of support/information/ed psychologists for ECE.  
Resources such as hand outs, networking, support groups were followed up from this.
- ✓ *Under representation-Moved from weak to very good.*  
This area led to lots of discussion & reflection around gender, diversity, cultural & socio economic issues.  
Specifically interested in more boys identified than girls & cultural aspirations/identification.
- ✓ *Working with others of same ability- From weak to good.*  
Led to discussion around provision for individuals in ECE.

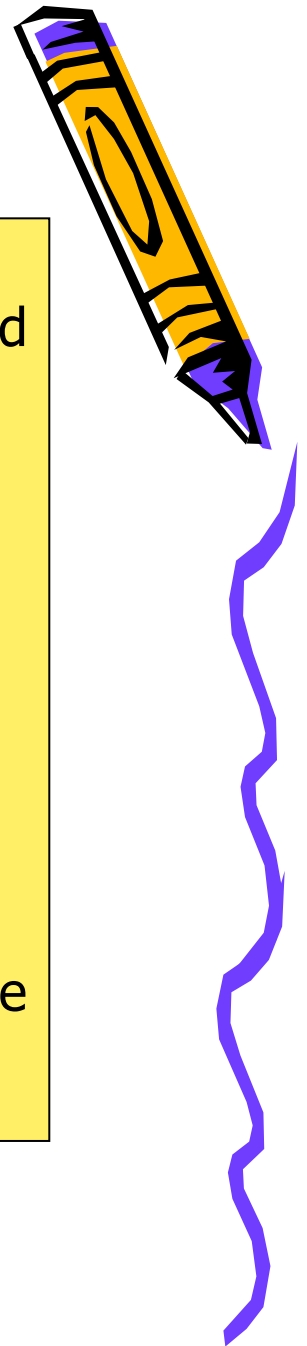




- ✓ Parent nominations- Moved from good to very good  
Socio cultural basis of Te Whāriki, theory, personal experiences assisted shifts here.
- ✓ Can ECE meet gifted children's potential-Good to very good
- ✓ Issues for gifted children-Stayed the same
- ✓ Further teacher training & relevance to teachers- Same
- ✓ Need for special provision to succeed – Stayed the same



# Overall Results

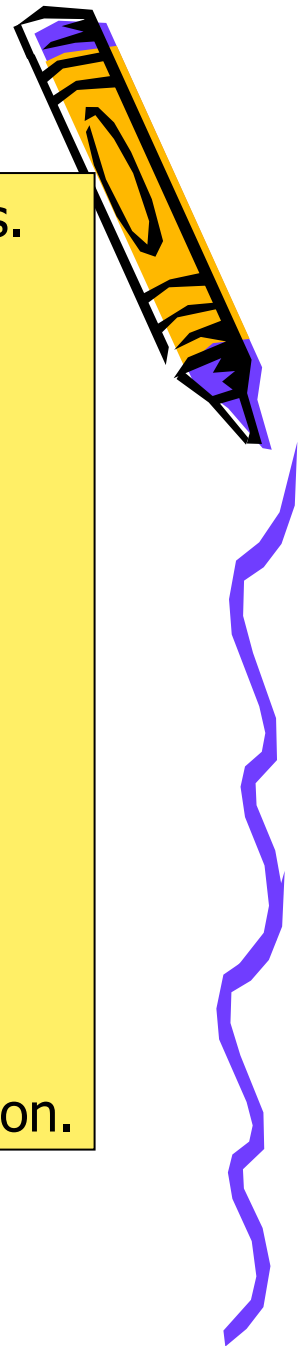


- Teachers attitudes and understanding were identified through the questionnaires, expectations were identified within and following the workshop.
- The results from questionnaire 3 identified specific positive shifts in understandings, attitudes and expectations.
- Professional development did impact on and change teachers attitudes, expectations and understanding although it highlighted the need for more PD, information and support.





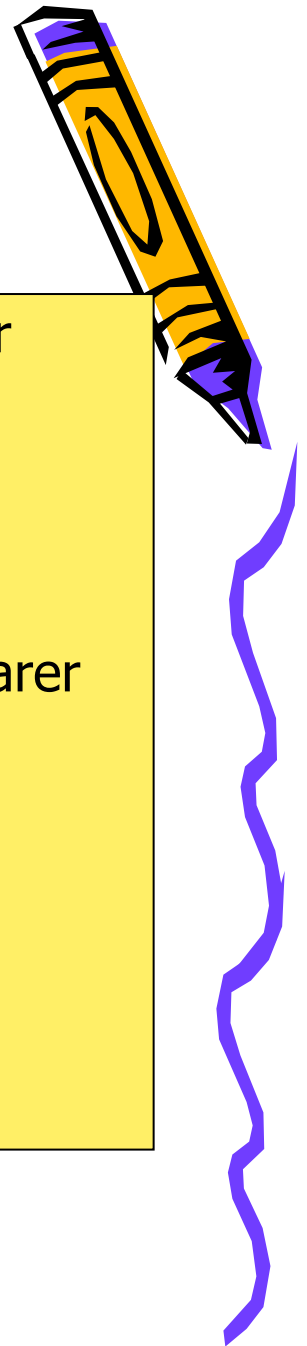
# The Journey that Followed



- Teachers began to openly question, read, reflect & discuss. It was heartening to experience the enthusiasm displayed by the teachers involved within this research.
- Some teachers continued with further professional development.
- Teachers started to consult people with regard to identification of specific children.
- Teachers confidence grew, "We are not alone".
- Parents/families were supported and given more information.



# Immediate Pathways

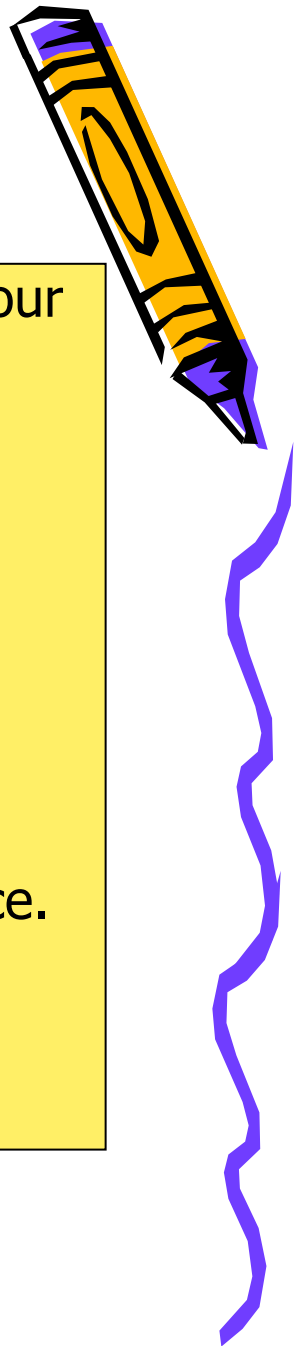


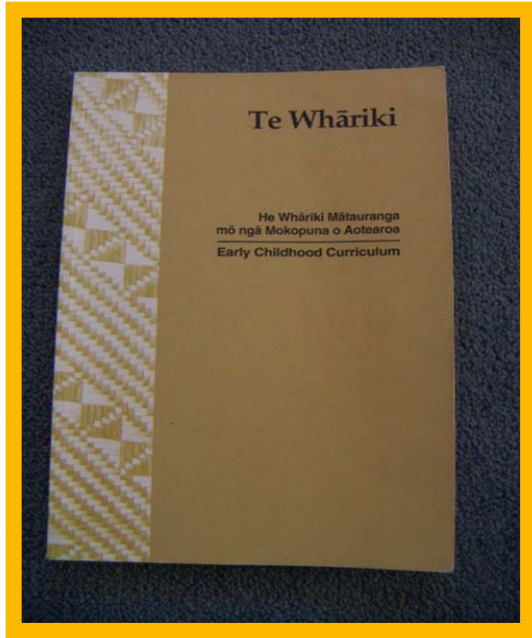
- The research led me into an advocacy and support role for teachers, parents and children. A 'Myth Buster'.
- Gifted playgroup set up for 2005 – provided for by DKA.
- A more active role as an ECE representative and office bearer within the Otago Association for the Gifted and Talented.
- A continuing commitment to gifted education within early childhood education.
- Providing workshops for parents.



## Where To Next?

- Continue to highlight the area of gifted within ECE within our own areas. We need to remove the ceilings for these children.
- Continue with the advocacy role for parents/families.
- Continue professional development/networking.
- Look at our ECE practice closely and discover how well we provide for gifted children. To 'live' Te Whāriki and Kei Tua o te Pae and make use of them in our daily practice. N R R.
- Celebrate giftedness within our culture.





## Helen Keller

One can never creep  
when one feels the  
impulse to soar.

